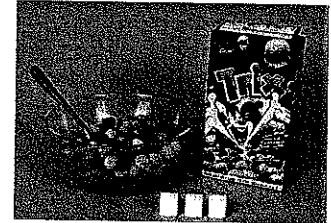


How Much Sugar?

Consumption has risen every year but one since 1983 and the average American consumes 20 teaspoons of sugar per day. Because of the sharp increase in sugar consumption, paralleled by a doubling in the rate of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents in the past 20 years, health groups petitioned the Food and Drug Administration in 1999 to set a "Daily Value" for added sugar intake and list on food labels the amount of added sugars and the "% Daily Value" per serving. At present, the USDA recommends limiting added sugars to:

- **24 grams a day (6 teaspoons) if you eat 1,600 calories**
- **40 grams (10 teaspoons) for a 2,000-calorie diet**
- **56 grams (14 teaspoons) for a 2,400-calorie diet, and**
- **72 grams (18 teaspoons) for a 2,800-calorie diet.**



The term "added sugars" does not include the sugars naturally present in:

- milk (lactose)
- fruit (fructose, sucrose)
- vegetables



Consumption of "added sugars" includes:

- table sugar (refined, processed sugars from cane, beet - sucrose - added to foods by the manufacturer, cook or consumer)
- corn sugar (glucose)
- corn syrup
- high-fructose corn syrup
- sugars naturally present in fruit juices
- honey
- other syrups, like molasses and maple syrup



Why added sugar can be a problem

Added sugar probably isn't harmful in small amounts. But there's no health advantage to consuming any amount of added sugar. And too much added sugar, and in some cases naturally occurring sugar, can lead to such health problems as:

- **Tooth decay.** All forms of sugar promote tooth decay by allowing bacteria to grow. The more often and longer you snack on foods and beverages with either natural sugar or added sugar, the more likely you are to develop cavities, especially if you don't practice good oral hygiene.
- **Poor nutrition.** If you fill up on foods laden with added sugar, you may skimp on nutritious foods, which means you could miss out on important nutrients, vitamins and minerals. Regular soda plays an especially big role. It's easy to fill up on sweetened soft drinks and skip low-fat milk and even water — giving you lots of extra sugar and calories and no nutritional value.
- **Weight gain.** There's usually no single cause for being overweight or obese. But added sugar likely contributes to the problem. One reason is that added sugar helps makes food taste better, and that may encourage you to keep eating even when you don't need to or aren't actually hungry. Sugar is also very energy dense, which means a small amount of food or drink with added sugar has a large amount of calories.
- **Increased triglycerides.** Some evidence suggests that eating an excessive amount of added sugar can increase triglyceride levels, boosting your risk of heart disease.

Tips to help you get that sugar monkey off your back

- Don't avoid sugar like the plague. Demystify it. Sugar is neither evil nor your friend. Nutritionally speaking, when you eat sugar, you get only empty calories. There are no virtues associated with sugar.
- Eat regular meals. Having small meals every two-three hours will keep your blood glucose levels stable.
- Don't use sweet treats as a distraction. When you find yourself reaching for the jelly beans, ask yourself what's going on. If you're hungry, have the kind of snack that will last longer than a sugar rush -- some almonds, for instance. If you're stressed, take a walk. If you're sad, call a friend. If you're bored, get out of the house.
- Don't fool yourself into thinking you can eat more of other foods because you have downed a diet soft drink or put artificial sweetener in your coffee.
- Get rid of the candy dish on your desk and the stash of Ring-Dings in your kitchen. If junk food isn't around, you can't eat it. When you want a sugary snack, go out and buy one only.
- Get more pleasure out of a piece of higher quality chocolate rather than out of a bag of Hershey's kisses every other day. If you can get into the habit of having a little of your favorite sweet thing every day, you may be less likely to "lose control" and work your way through the candy counter.
- Take inventory of your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry. Start reading the food labels. If high fructose corn syrup is one of the main ingredients, scratch it off your grocery list.
- Start shopping around the perimeter of your grocery store; this is where you will find the foods in their natural, unprocessed state.

Source: http://www.reduce triglycerides.com/reader_high_triglycerides_sugar_intake.htm

Artificial Sweeteners

Sugar substitutes can offer calorie-conscious consumers a way to enjoy the taste of sweetness with little or no calories and no glycemic response. They may assist in weight management, blood glucose control, and the prevention of dental caries.

Research shows that non-nutritive sweeteners may promote weight loss in overweight and obese individuals when they replace the intake of sugar calories with sugar substitutes. However, preliminary studies on animals suggest that high intakes of artificial sweeteners may affect appetite control (i.e. by eating more sweet foods—artificially sweetened or not—you crave more of them). Therefore, the Beverage Guidance Panel Recommends that adults consume no more than 32 ounces of artificially sweetened beverages daily. Individuals who want to use artificial sweeteners should do so within the context of a sensible weight-management program that includes a balanced diet and regular exercise.

Though artificial sweeteners have been accused of causing everything from mood and behavioral disorders to headaches, multiple sclerosis, obesity, heart disease and cancer, there are no published, peer-reviewed, controlled scientific studies to support these accusations.

Foods sweetened with sugar substitutes are lower in calories than food sweetened with caloric sweeteners and can be one component of a weight loss program. But remember, you need to control *calories* in your entire eating plan to lose weight. Removing the sugar from a soda, cookie or candy bar does not turn it into a health food. Without monitoring your portion size, you can still get too many calories and zero nutritional benefits from foods and drinks that contain artificial sweeteners.

Source: http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=289